

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 05253

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: EXEMPT

TAGS: PFOR, GW, US, XG

SUBJECT: RADIO FREE EUROPE AND RADIO LIBERTY

REF: STATE 61278

1. A MEETING OF THE TYPE PROPOSED WOULD PRESUMABLY BE VALUABLE IN CLARIFYING TO SOME CONGRESSMEN THE PROBLEMS WHICH MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS TO PROVIDE SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING AID FOR THE RADIOS, AND IN MAKING THE EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVES UNDERSTAND THAT WE ARE NOT MERELY CRYING WOLF WHEN WE SAY THAT THE FUTURE OF THE RADIOS WILL BE SERIOUSLY ENDANGERED UNLESS THERE IS A EUROPEAN CONTRIBUTION LARGE ENOUGH TO IMPRESS THE CONGRESS. SO FAR AS THE FRG IS CONCERNED, A MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR VON STADEN REPORTING SUCH AN ENCOUNTER COULD PROVIDE A HELPFUL SUPPLEMENT TO MY OWN RECENT APPROACH TO STATE SECRETARY FRANK (BONN 4503); AT ANY RATE, IT CERTAINLY WOULD NOT HURT. NEVERTHELESS, I AM NOT AT ALL SANGUINE THAT THE REVIEW WHICH FRANK PROMISED WILL HAVE MAJOR POSITIVE RESULTS, AND I DOUBT VERY MUCH THAT THE OUTCOME WOULD BE CHANGED SUBSTANTIALY BY A MEETING IN WASHINGTON.

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2. BASICALLY, THE POSITION OF THIS GERMAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ONE OF PASSIVE TOLERATION. AS FRANK INDICATED TO ME, THE RADIOS HAVE CAUSED OCCASIONAL DIFFICULTIES FOR THE FRG (ALBEIT MINOR ONES) IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ITS RELATIONS TO EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES, PARTICULARLY POLAND AND THE SOVIET UNION. TO THOSE WHO HAVE HAD A MAJOR ROLE IN BONN'S EASTERN POLICY, A SEVERE CURTAILMENT OF THE RADIOS' OPERATIONS, OR EVEN THEIR COMPLETE DEMISE, WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE UNWELCOME, ALTHOUGH NO DOUBT A FEW CROCODILE TEARS WOULD BE SHED. STILL, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS NEVER MADE A DIRECT ATTACK ON THE RADIOS, RECOGNIZING THE DAMAGE THIS WOULD DO TO ITS RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. AND THE DOMESTIC CONTROVERSY IT WOULD AROUSE IN THE FRG.

3. MY FEELING IS THAT, IN THE ABSENCE OF EXTREME PRESSURE FROM THE USG, THE GERMANS WILL PREFER TO MAINTAIN THEIR PASSIVE ATTITUDE, OF WHICH NON-INVOLVEMENT IS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT. NATURALLY THEY WOULD TAKE A MUCH MORE SERIOUS LOOK AT THE SITUATION IF WE WERE TO TELL THEM AT A HIGH LEVEL THAT A EUROPEAN CONTRIBUTION WAS ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL FUTURE OPERATIONS OF THE RADIOS AND THAT IT WAS A MATTER OF ABSOLUTELY FIRST PRIORITY FOR U.S. POLICY. HOWEVER, THE AMOUNT OF POLITICAL CAPITAL TO BE INVESTED IN THE RADIOS WILL HAVE TO BE ASSESSED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE WIDE RANGE OF SUBJECTS ON WHICH WE SEEK FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM THE FRG.

HILLENBRAND

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